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[Review of the Book] *Contemporary Art Colombia*

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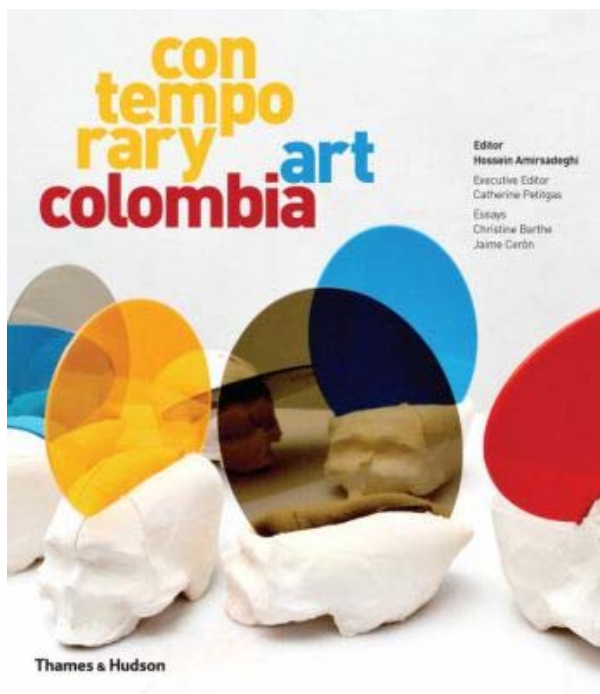
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Contemporary Art Colombia

ed. by Hossein Amirsadeghi and Catherine Petitgas. Thames & Hudson, January 2017. 304 p. ill. ISBN 9780500970768 (h/c), \$85.00.

Reviewed May 2017

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This book marks the latest in a series about global contemporary art edited by Hossein Amirsadeghi. Amirsadeghi is an arts writer and the head of the British art book publisher TransGlobe Publishing Ltd., which co-published *Contemporary Art Colombia* with Thames & Hudson, and which was the sole publisher of earlier books in the series on contemporary art in Iran, Turkey, the larger Arab world, and Russia. Thames & Hudson has picked up Amirsadeghi's series to co-publish recent volumes on the contemporary art of Korea, Scandinavia, and Mexico, each edited by Amirsadeghi with other co-editors, along with two widely reviewed books about contemporary artists' studios in Britain and the United States.

Each book in the series is worth seeking out. They are large format, high-production hardcovers fully illustrated in color throughout with notably strong, quality images. They make deep investigations into the origins and current situations of the contemporary art scenes in each country or region they cover.

As with other books in the series, *Contemporary Art Colombia* begins with several short scholarly essays on the country's art and political history by writers who know the field well. The essays are followed by a longer section with thorough encyclopedic-style entries on artists working in Colombia, alphabetized by artists' last names, and accompanied by many color photographs of each artist's work. At the back, a timeline demonstrates chronology and a long index lists names of institutions and other personal names.

In its twentieth and twenty-first century history, Colombia has experienced a great deal of war, violence, wealth, and economic growth, all of which have contributed to its current flourishing art market. A 2014 exhibit, *Waterweavers* (Bard Graduate Center), presented the work of seventeen current Colombian visual artists, designers, and writers to the United States, and many of the visual artists from that exhibit are included here, such as Alberto Baraya, Monika Bravo, Juan Fernando Herrán, and María Isabel Rueda. Well-known Colombian artists like Doris Salcedo and Juan Manuel Echavarría, and others less published in English, who will perhaps be introduced to some English-speaking audiences for the first time here, are all described and illustrated. Altogether, ninety artists are included in the survey.

Contemporary Art Colombia is written and produced in an accessible style that will appeal to general readers as well as contemporary art specialists. Like others in Amirsadeghi's contemporary art series, it collects information on a place that is somewhat peripheral in the art world, brings strong artists and their work to the fore, and considers the work in a global context. Its broad and deep collection of so much information on a particular country's artistic production make it a valuable book for museum library collections and academic research collections, as well as individuals.

 2017 May
 contemporary art
 reviews